

I recently gave a speech at the Coast Guard Academy, and I was preceded by a young man, a Latino, who stood up as the head of his class, addressing his classmates and their families and the President of the United States. And he talked about his migrant grandfather, how proud the migrant grandfather would be. It struck me again what a remarkable country it is where a person with a dream for his immediate family and future family could come to this country, work hard, make sacrifices, and have his grandson address the President and his class.

This has been the American story for decades and decades—waves of people looking for a better life, seeking something better for themselves and their families, willing to sacrifice and work hard. And we've got to understand—and great successes have resulted from that spirit. And this country must never lose sight that what has made us unique and, in my judgment, great is that we welcome people like that in a legal way, that throughout our history there have been the stories of people who have enriched our soul and lifted our spirit by coming to America.

One of the great things about our country is we've had the capacity to welcome people throughout our history. And we've become all Americans. We've got different backgrounds, different heritages, our forefathers may have spoken different languages, but we're all American. We've been able to assimilate under the laws and traditions of our country. And as a result, we're a stronger nation for it.

America must not fear diversity. We ought to welcome diversity. We ought to have confidence in what we have done in the past and not lose confidence about what we will do in the future.

And so I want to thank you all for joining on a really important piece of legislation. It's the right thing to do. It's the right approach to take. It is right to address a problem. It is right to work with people in both political parties. It is right to argue for what you believe and recognize that compromise might be necessary to move the bill along. And it is right to take political risk for Members of the United States Congress.

I say—I don't think this is risky, frankly. I don't view this as risk reward. I, frankly,

view it as doing what you ought to do. See, people ought to be running for office to do what's right for the United States of America. That's what I believe people run for office for. And so I want you to know that you've got an administration that looks forward to working with people. I will do my best to make sure that this debate does not denigrate into name-calling and finger-pointing. And we'll spend energy and time and effort to help you advance a really important piece of legislation for the good of this country.

I've come by to say thanks. Chertoff and Gutierrez can tell you how the bill has gotten this far and what we see in the future. But I'm looking forward to signing a bill, and I think we will. I truly believe that when people with good will and good heart and with focus on helping this country come together, that we can get a good piece of legislation out. And I'm looking forward to signing it. I hope you'll be there when I do.

God bless. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:26 p.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to S. 1348.

Statement on the American Citizens Held in Iran

June 1, 2007

Several of our fellow American citizens—including Haleh Esfandiari, Parnaz Azima, Kian Tajbakhsh, and Ali Shakeri—are being held against their will by the Iranian regime. I strongly condemn their detention at the hands of Iranian authorities. They should be freed immediately and unconditionally.

These individuals have dedicated themselves to building bridges between the American and Iranian people, a goal the Iranian regime claims to support. Their presence in Iran—to visit their parents or to conduct humanitarian work—poses no threat. Indeed, their activities are typical of the abiding ties that Iranian Americans have with their land of origin.

I am also disturbed by the Iranian regime's refusal so far to provide any information on

Robert Levinson, despite repeated U.S. requests. I call on Iran's leaders to tell us what they know about his whereabouts.

The United States is committed to protecting its citizens at home and abroad. We will maintain our efforts on behalf of these citizens until all of them are reunited with their families.

**Statement on the Resignation of
Daniel J. Bartlett as Counselor to the
President**

June 1, 2007

Laura and I will miss Dan Bartlett very much. Dan has been a true counselor to the President. His contribution has been immeasurable. I value his judgment, and I treasure his friendship. Since coming to work for me 14 years ago as I prepared to run for Governor, Dan has become a husband and a father. I understand his decision to make his young family his first priority. His most important job is to be a loving husband and father of three young sons. We wish him all the best.

**Proclamation 8153—Caribbean-
American Heritage Month, 2007**

June 1, 2007

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

During June, we recognize Caribbean Americans and celebrate the many ways they contribute to our Nation.

Generations of Caribbean Americans have helped shape the spirit and character of our country. These individuals are justly proud of their Caribbean roots, and they enrich the American experience by sharing their traditions, history, and values. Caribbean Americans of all walks of life have added to the vitality, success, and prosperity of our country. Their hard work and determination inspire all who dream of a better life for themselves and their families.

Our Nation is deeply grateful to the Caribbean Americans who defend our liberty as members of our Armed Forces. The service

and sacrifice of these courageous men and women are helping lay the foundation of peace for generations to come.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim June 2007 as Caribbean-American Heritage Month. I encourage all Americans to learn more about the history and culture of Caribbean Americans and their contributions to our Nation.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of June, in the year of our Lord two thousand seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-first.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:55 a.m., June 4, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on June 5.

**Proclamation 8154—National
Homeownership Month, 2007**

June 1, 2007

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Owning a home is part of the American dream, and National Homeownership Month is an opportunity to encourage our citizens to explore the benefits of owning a home.

Owning a home provides a source of security and stability for many of our citizens. My Administration is committed to fostering an ownership society and helping more Americans realize the great promise of our country. Today, nearly 70 percent of Americans own their homes, and the rate of minority homeownership has climbed to above 50 percent since I took office in 2001. The Department of Housing and Urban Development is continuing to enforce the Fair Housing Act to confront housing discrimination and advance equal housing opportunities for everyone. We are also working with the Congress to modernize the Federal Housing Administration in order to better provide safe, fair, and